

“The Gift of Spiritual Friendship”

# STAYING STEADY

BUT YOU, BE SELF-POSSESSED  
IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES; PUT UP  
WITH HARDSHIP; PERFORM THE  
WORK OF AN EVANGELIST;  
FULFILL YOUR MINISTRY.

2 TIMOTHY 4:5



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# GUIDELINES

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- We can't control other people or how they will respond to us.
- We have to control ourselves and how we respond to people and situations around us.
- Our emotions shouldn't control us.



# PASSIONS

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- Strong feelings are not decisive for the morality or the holiness of persons; they are simply the inexhaustible reservoir of images and affections in which the moral life is expressed. Passions are morally good when they contribute to a good action, evil in the opposite case. The upright will orders the movements of the senses it appropriates to the good and to beatitude; an evil will succumbs to disordered passions and exacerbates them. Emotions and feelings can be taken up into the virtues or perverted by the vices. **(1768 Catechism of the Catholic Church)**
- In the Christian life, the Holy Spirit himself accomplishes his work by mobilizing the whole being, with all its sorrows, fears and sadness, as is visible in the Lord's agony and passion. In Christ human feelings are able to reach their consummation in charity and divine beatitude. **(1769 Catechism of the Catholic Church)**



# FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

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If we look closely at Jesus we will see how patient He is with the defects of His disciples, and how unweariedly He repeats the same teaching over and over again, explaining it in detail, so that His slow-minded and easily distracted friends can master His saving doctrine. He never loses patience with their obtuseness and failure to grasp His meaning. Truly, Jesus who is our master and Lord and at the same time is meek and humble of heart, acted patiently in attracting and inviting his disciples. (In **Conversation with God V1 p.82**)



# ALLOWING THE HOLY SPIRIT TO GUIDE US

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We must not make the mistake of thinking that this 'bad temper' of ours, which bursts out in very definite circumstances and times, depends on the character of the people around us. The peace of our spirit does not depend on the good nature and kindness of other people. Our neighbors' good nature and kindness are in no way subject to our control or opinion. That would be absurd. The tranquillity of our heart depends on ourselves. The ability to avoid anger, with all its ridiculous effects, has to come from within ourselves and not be dependent on the nature of other people. The power to overcome the evil in our character must not depend on some perfection outside us, but on our own virtue.

**St. John Cassian Constitutions, 8**



# MEEKNESS

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- Doesn't mean you let people walk all over you like a doormat.
- Meekness controls and directs anger.
- "Meekness sets its face against those pointless displays of violence which at bottom are signs of weakness, such as impatience, irritation, bad temper and hatred. It is opposed to all useless waste of energy in unnecessary anger, which so often originates in little things that might have been passed over in silence or with a smile, and which never has any useful results." (ICWG p.85)



# MEEKNESS

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Those explosions of bad temper between husband and wife, which can gradually corrode true love, stem from a lack of this virtue. So does irritability, with its serious consequences for the bringing up of children. The same lack of meekness destroys our peace in prayer, because instead of talking to God we brood over our injuries....

Mastery of oneself - which is part of true meekness - is the weapon of those who are really strong; it prevents us from answering back too quickly and from speaking wounding words which afterwards we wish we had never said.

Meekness knows how to wait for the right moment, and to express its judgments in a way that carries conviction....



# MEEKNESS

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*The meek shall inherit the earth.* First they will possess themselves, because they will not be the slaves of their impatience and bad temper; they will possess God, because their souls will always be inclined to prayer, in a continual consciousness of the presence of God; they will possess those around them, because they have the kind of hearts which win friendship and affection, indispensable for everyday social life and for all apostolate.



# MEEKNESS

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Let us examine ourselves on our readiness to make the sacrifices necessary to make life pleasant for other people. Let us see if we are able to give way to other people's opinions, instead of claiming to be always right about everything, and if we know how to control our temper and disregard the frictions which are inevitable in daily life. Advent is a good time for strengthening this attitude of mind. We will achieve it if we talk more often to Jesus, Mary and Joseph; if we make a real effort every day to be more understanding with the people around us; if we never stop trying to smooth out the rough edges of our characters; if we know how to go to the Tabernacle to talk over with Our Lord the subjects which are uppermost in our thoughts. (ICWG pp.86-87)



# THE BATTLEFIELD OF THE MIND

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- Your thoughts create your moods. Cognition actually refers to beliefs, perceptions, and mental attitudes, and how you interpret events. These thoughts can create the emotions of anger, hostility, depression, sadness, anxiety, fear, shame, or guilt.
- When a person feels depressed, his thoughts are dominated by negativity.
- The negative thoughts linked to emotional turmoil nearly always contain major distortions. These distortions might also be called irrational, twisted, or unrealistic thought patterns



# 10 DISTORTIONS IN THOUGHT

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## 1. All-or-Nothing Thinking

The person who thinks this way sees everything in black-or-white terms. No shades of gray are possible. Perfectionists see their work as either perfect or worthless. The healthy person sees spectrums and variations and exceptions in nearly every area of life.



# 10 DISTORTIONS IN THOUGHT

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## 2. Overgeneralizations

This is the tendency to draw sweeping conclusions from very little evidence. For example, a man who is turned down by one woman after he asks for a date may draw the conclusion that all women will reject him and he will never get a date. The healthy thinker draws conclusions only after taking in a great deal of evidence.



# 10 DISTORTIONS IN THOUGHT

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## 3. Negative Mental Filter

This person filters out any bit of information that is positive or good. She just doesn't hear compliments or words of affirmation or praise. She hears only criticism. The healthy person hears both good and bad.



# 10 DISTORTIONS IN THOUGHT

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## 4. Disqualifying the Positive

This person hears the compliment but discounts it. He explains away words of affirmation or praise. For example, a person who is given a promotion may say, "I don't deserve this. They are just feeling sorry for me because I'm really such a loser." The healthy person receives compliments and praise, and uses them to validate his own self-esteem .



# 10 DISTORTIONS IN THOUGHT

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## 5. Jumping to Conclusions

This person believes she knows at all times, with 100 percent accuracy, what other people are thinking about her. The healthy person assumes she isn't a mind reader.



# 10 DISTORTIONS IN THOUGHT

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## 6. Magnification (Catastrophizing) or Minimization

This person exaggerates the importance of isolated events or encounters. He may magnify his own emotions, mistakes, or imperfections. He minimizes, however, any success he may have. A healthy-thinking person maximizes the good points and minimizes the failures.



# 10 DISTORTIONS OF THOUGHT

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## 7. Emotional Reasoning

This person sees an outcome as directly flowing from her emotions. For example, the person may feel hopeless about passing an exam, so she doesn't show up to take it. The healthy person separates current feelings from future events.



# 10 DISTORTIONS IN THOUGHT

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## 8. "Should" Statements

This person has a rigid set of internal rules about what should, must, ought to, can't, and has to be done. The healthy person knows and expresses the fact that there are very few hard-and-fast rules in life.



# 10 DISTORTIONS OF THOUGHT

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## 9. Labeling and Mislabeling

This person is likely to give himself or another person negative labels such as “stupid,” “idiot,” “imbecile,” “loser,” “jerk,” or “pig.” The healthy person avoids labels. ( I like to remind people that God gave mankind the authority and responsibility of naming *animals*, not human beings.)



# 10 DISTORTIONS IN THOUGHT

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## 10. Personalization

This person blames himself for events which he has no control or less control than he assumes. I've encountered a number of parents who blame themselves for their teenagers' experimentation with drugs. They become filled with guilt and self-judgment when the fact is, they need to hold the teenager accountable for *his* choices and behavior. The healthy person person refuses to take responsibility or blame for someone else's freewill choices.



# INTERIOR JOY

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The most important and most fruitful acts of our freedom are not those by which we transform the outside world as those by which we change our inner attitude in light of the faith that God can bring good out of everything without exception. Here is a never-failing source of unlimited riches. Our lives no longer have in them anything negative, ordinary, or indifferent. Positive things become a reason for gratitude and joy, negative things an opportunity for abandonment, faith, and offering; everything becomes a grace. (**Interior Freedom p. 58**)



# FRIENDSHIP DYNAMICS

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- Friendship is a school of love in which we gain a keener perception of who we are and how we operate within relationships — and so we learn how to better relate to others. (Caltagirone p.30)
- Do we listen with the intent to understand or to respond?
- Meyers / Briggs